

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled).

2. (Currently Amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 1~~ An apparatus for removing nails from a tape, the apparatus comprising:

a guide directing a path of movement of the tape through the apparatus, the guide having a transition end over which the tape passes as the tape moves through the apparatus, the guide transition end being adapted to form a bend in the tape thereby exposing a head of the nail from the tape as the tape passes over the guide transition end; and

a claw being adapted to engage the nail head as the nail head is exposed when the tape passes over the guide transition end;

wherein the guide transition end is curved to create a gap between the nail head and the tape as the tape passes over the guide transition end.

3. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 1~~ An apparatus for removing nails from a tape, the apparatus comprising:

a guide directing a path of movement of the tape through the apparatus, the guide having a transition end over which the tape passes as the tape moves through the apparatus, the guide transition end being adapted to form a bend in the tape thereby exposing a head of the nail from the tape as the tape passes over the guide transition end; and

a claw being adapted to engage the nail head as the nail head is exposed when the tape passes over the guide transition end;

wherein the guide has at least one slot in a top surface of the guide extending through the guide transition end, the at least one slot is dimensioned to accommodate a length of the nail, the at least one slot permits rotation of the nail within the slot as the tape passes over the guide transition end.

4. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 1~~ An apparatus for removing nails from a tape, the apparatus comprising:

a guide directing a path of movement of the tape through the apparatus, the guide having a transition end over which the tape passes as the tape moves through the apparatus, the guide transition end being adapted to form a bend in the tape thereby exposing a head of the nail from the tape as the tape passes over the guide transition end; and

a claw being adapted to engage the nail head as the nail head is exposed when the tape passes over the guide transition end;

wherein the guide transition end is formed with a relief to allow the nail to change its relative direction of travel through the apparatus as the tape passes through the guide transition end.

5. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 1~~ An apparatus for removing nails from a tape, the apparatus comprising:

a guide directing a path of movement of the tape through the apparatus, the guide having a transition end over which the tape passes as the tape moves through the apparatus, the guide transition end being adapted to form a bend in the tape thereby exposing a head of the nail from the tape as the tape passes over the guide transition end; and

a claw being adapted to engage the nail head as the nail head is exposed when the tape passes over the guide transition end;

wherein the guide transition end creates relative movement between the tape and the nail when the tape passes over the guide transition end.

6. (Currently amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 1~~ An apparatus for removing nails from a tape, the apparatus comprising:

a guide directing a path of movement of the tape through the apparatus, the guide having a transition end over which the tape passes as the tape moves through the apparatus, the guide transition end being adapted to form a bend in the tape thereby exposing a head of the nail from the tape as the tape passes over the guide transition end; and

a claw being adapted to engage the nail head as the nail head is exposed when the tape passes over the guide transition end;

wherein the claw comprises an extraction plate adapted to be positioned at an oblique angle to the path of movement of the tape, the extraction plate has a sliding surface adapted to capture the nail head as it is exposed from the tape and a slot adapted to slidably receive a

shank of the nail as the tape passes beyond the extraction plate whereby the motion of the tape relative to the extraction plate separates the nail from the tape.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the extraction plate sliding surface has a relief formed on its opposite side, the extraction plate relief substantially faces the tape as the tape passes over the guide transition end.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the extraction plate is adapted to allow the nails to be emptied from the claw as the nails are separated from the tape.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the angle between the extraction plate and the tape is adjustably set.

10. (Original) An apparatus for removing nails from a tape, the apparatus comprising:
a tape advancement mechanism being adapted to advance the tape through the apparatus;

a roller being adapted to maintain tension in the tape as the tape advances through the apparatus;

a guide being positioned opposite the roller and adapted to support the tape against the roller whereby the guide and the roller tension the tape as the tape is advanced through the apparatus by the tape advancement mechanism, the guide being adapted to expose a head of the nail from the tape as the tape travels from the roller to the tape advancement mechanism;
and

a claw being adapted to engage the nail head when the nail head is exposed from the tape as the tape travels over the guide from the roller to the tape advancement mechanism.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the guide is formed to change a direction of travel of the tape through the apparatus and the nail head is exposed from the tape when the tape changes its direction of travel.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the claw engages the nail head when the tape changes its relative direction of travel as the tape passes over the guide from the roller to the tape advancement mechanism.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the claw has an extraction plate adapted to be received in a gap formed between the nail head and the tape when the nail head is exposed from the tape.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the extraction plate has a sliding surface adapted to capture the nail head as it is exposed from the tape and a slot adapted to slidably receive a shank of the nail as the tape passes beyond the extraction plate whereby the motion of the tape relative to the extraction plate separates the nail from the tape.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the extraction plate has a relief formed on its distal end thereby allowing the extraction plate to be placed sufficiently close to the tape to engage the nail head as the tape changes its relative direction of travel.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the claw is adjustably rotatable relative to the tape.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the tape advancement mechanism winds the tape on a spool in advancing the tape through the apparatus.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18 21 wherein the step of drawing the tape along the guide comprises creating tension in the tape so that the tape conforms to the guide.

20. (Cancelled).

21. (Currently amended) ~~The method of claim 20~~ A method comprising:
providing a tape with nails extending therethrough;
drawing the tape along a guide in a manner so as to bend the tape and expose a head
of the nail from the tape at a selected position on the guide; and
positioning a claw adjacent the selected position of the guide to engage the nail head
and remove the nail from the tape;

wherein the step of positioning the claw includes rotating the claw relative to the tape so as to create an angle between the claw and a path of travel of the tape whereby the relative motion between the claw and the tape cause the nail to be separated from the tape when the claw engages the nail head; and

wherein the step of creating the angle includes rotating the claw to a position whereby the at least one nail removed from the tape is emptied from the claw as the tape is drawn past the claw.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 48 21 wherein the step of drawing the tape further comprises winding the tape on a spool after the tapes passes the claw and the nails are removed.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 48 21 further comprising changing a relative direction of travel of the tape at the selected position on the guide.

24. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 23 wherein the step of changing the direction of the path of travel of the tape includes bending the tape thereby creating a gap between the nail head and the tape as the tape is drawn over the selected position.